



Congressman

Gene Green

29th Congressional District of Texas

January 2007

Dear Friend,

This newsletter announces our town hall meetings that will begin after the new year, as well as our twice yearly Paying for College Workshop. Our newsletters are designed to discuss national and local issues that are of interest to our community.

This newsletter focuses on national issues including healthcare, homeland security, and immigration; as well as issues before the new Congress. It also discusses issues that are important to our district, such as highway/street construction and education updates that may not be in our local media. Each of our town hall meetings and the Paying for College Workshop are held at different locations around our district.

A new majority will lead Congress in 2007 and Members will return to Washington on January 4 for swearing-in ceremonies. We currently have scheduled town hall meetings for two Saturdays in January. More will be planned in the spring, including our Senior Citizens' and Veterans' Forums.

You and your family are welcome to attend one or all of these events. You do not have to wait for a town hall meeting to contact me. You can call any of our local district offices or email us through our website address listed below.

It is an honor to serve you and I hope that you and your family have a joyous, safe and prosperous new year.

Sincerely,

Gene Green
Member of Congress

Town Hall Meetings

Saturday, January 20th @ 9:00 a.m.
Houston Community College-Northeast
555 Community College Drive
Codwell Hall, Room 219

Saturday, January 20th @ 11:00 a.m.
San Jacinto College-North Campus
5800 Uvalde
Monument Room, Slovacek Student Center
2nd Floor

Saturday, January 27th @ 9:00 a.m. Dear Friend,
Houston Community College-Southeast
6815 Rustic Avenue
Lecture Hall, Angela Morales Bldg.
Room 1005

Saturday, January 27th @ 11:00 a.m.
Houston Community College-Northline
401 Northline Mall
Lecture Hall

Congressman Green and his staff discuss the preparation of care packages to be sent to Houston service men and women serving in Iraq.

OFFICE ADDRESSES

10 North Gaillard
Baytown, TX 77520
281-420-0502
Fax: 281-420-0585

2335 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515
202-225-1688
Fax: 202-225-9903

256 N. Sam Houston Pkwy. E.
Suite 29
Houston, TX 77060
281-999-5879
Fax: 281-999-5716

11811 I-10 East, Suite 430
Houston, TX, 77029
713-330-0761
Fax: 713-330-0807

www.house.gov/green/

Congress Extends Sales Tax Deduction for Texans

Congress recently voted to extend the Sales Tax Deduction for 2006. This means Texas residents will continue to be able to deduct their state sales tax on annual federal income tax returns. The tax forms you receive will not reflect this recent law change.

For more information on the new law and/or new forms please contact the following ofices:

Taxpayer Advocate
1919 Smith Street, Room 1650.
Houston, TX 77002
(713) 209-3660.

Local IRS Offices:
12941 I-45 N.
Houston, TX 77060
(281) 721-7021

Local IRS Offices:
8876 I-45 S.
Houston, TX 77017
(281) 721-7021

Or visit their website at www.irs.gov.

Homeland Security Update:

In September 2006, Congressman Green led a Harris County Congressional delegation letter in support of Port Security Grant funding for our area. The Department of Homeland Security then awarded \$10.7 million in funding for the protection of the Houston Ship Channel and its critical energy and chemical facilities. The 2005 Port Security Grant Round brought \$35 million to the area, and the Department of Homeland Security now recognizes the Port of Houston as one of three "Tier 1" ports in the U.S.

In 2006, Harris County received \$9 million in Port Security Grant Program funding to improve their facility and perimeter security with an electronic intrusion detection system, enhance interoperable communication, and purchase additional patrol boats for law enforcement in the port area. In addition, the Port of Houston Authority received \$1.7 million in funding to improve their facility and perimeter security through the installation of enhanced security fencing and gates along with additional cameras and access control hardware.

This funding covers security boats, radars, cameras, underwater sonar, a bomb disruption robot, radiation detectors, card readers, cameras, gates, lights, security stations, and video software which will be linked through secure network and will be operational by 2007.

Health Care Update: ~Green Works to Secure Funding For Critical Health Care Projects

On January 1, 2007, monthly premiums for Medicare Part B will increase to \$93.50, a \$5 increase from monthly premiums Medicare Part B beneficiaries paid in 2006. This 5.6 percent increase is higher than the 3.3 percent increase in the Social Security cost-of-living adjustment received by Social Security beneficiaries, many of whom rely on their monthly Social Security checks to pay their Medicare Part B premiums. I have co-sponsored legislation that would limit the annual Medicare Part B premium increase to 25 percent of the Social Security COLA, which would ensure that seniors living on fixed incomes can pay their Part B premium.

We in Congress are also working to deliver critical federal health care dollars to our area. The committee-passed version of the House appropriations bill funding health care programs includes \$200,000 for Gateway to Care, which is Harris County's community health care collaborative charged with coordinating care for the uninsured and facilitating the development of health clinics in the county. The bill also includes \$250,000 for the Hospital District's Diabetes Program. The hospital district has developed the program to provide an integrated, interdisciplinary approach to reduce complications from diabetes among individuals in our community. Additionally, the bill includes \$100,000 in funding for UIMB's Maternal and Child Health clinic in Pasadena, which will help the clinic purchase a new ultrasound machine to expand prenatal care to low-income pregnant women.

Paying For College Workshop

Attention Parents & High School Students

Please join me and my special guest from the Sallie Mae Fund for an information workshop on paying for college. Education is important and we want to make sure you have access to information regarding financial aid and scholarships.

Monday, February 5, 2007
South Houston High School
3820 South Shaver
South Houston, TX
7:00 PM-8:30PM

New Congress, New Priorities:

Part D Negotiation Initiative:

One of the first items on the agenda for the new House leadership is legislation that would let the Medicare program negotiate directly with pharmaceutical companies to lower the cost of the prescription drugs in Part D.

The legislation creating the prescription drug benefit prohibited the government from leveraging the buying power of the Medicare program to obtain better prices for seniors under the prescription drug benefit.

With studies showing that prices are as much as 80 percent cheaper through the Department of Veterans Affairs – which currently negotiates the price of drugs for veterans – it only makes sense that negotiation will save money, for seniors, the government and all taxpayers.

Immigration Issue:

When the 110th Congress convenes in January, immigration will continue to be one of the top issues.

During the last Congress, several bills were passed that address immigration, but none of them were comprehensive. So far, Congress has passed laws that call for building several sections of fence along the border, we've made it a felony to tunnel under the border and to smuggle people across the border. We've also increased criminal penalties for people caught smuggling people into the United States.

I strongly support increasing border enforcement. I have supported implementing the 9-11 Commission recommendations. We should increase the number of Border Patrol Officers and the number of detention beds to prevent the "catch and release" of detained illegal immigrants.

Enforcement is only one component of the solution to this issue. Undocumented immigrants that can show they have no criminal record can pass a security clearance, and can show proof that they have been working in the United States should be allowed to apply for legal residency and eventually citizenship. However, people who want to apply will have to meet the requirements above and pay substantial fines plus regular fees, back taxes, and meet English and Civics requirements.

As part of the Agenda for the first 100 hours of the new Congress we are expected to consider a minimum wage increase for the first time in over a decade. The bill increases the minimum wage to \$7.25 an hour in the next three years.

I have supported increasing the minimum wage since I first came to Congress and will be a Co-Sponsor of this important legislation.

The three-year increase will bring the minimum wage from \$5.15 to \$5.85 in January of 2007, then to \$6.55 on June 1, 2008 and to \$7.25 in June of 2009. This is similar to a plan that Democratic Majority Leader Elect Steny Hoyer added to the Labor, Health and Human Services Appropriations bill in the summer of 2006, which I also supported.

In January, Congress will also take several votes on addressing ethics issues that will aim to regain the public's confidence in Congress. Legislation will be filed that bans gifts, meals and travel from lobbyists. Gifts and meals are now banned over \$50.00 for any one time limited to twice a year. Trips taken for educational purposes and trips that are fully disclosed are both equally allowed, even if paid for by lobbyists.

Also, legislation will be filed that requires Members of Congress to disclose any ear-marks that they request. Ear-marks fund special projects in Member's individual districts. I support fiscal responsibility and believe it is important that you know how much funding I am asking for on behalf of our community and where that funding is being spent.

The new Congress must have stronger ethics requirements for Members of Congress and our staff. I intend to support laws to prohibit lobbyist funded travel, gifts and meals. I also support an independent investigation arm to enforce Congressional rules.

Congressman Green speaks to students and their families about financial aid, during his bi-annual Paying for College Workshop.

Around the District:

Working to Expand Federally-Qualified Health Centers

The Federally-Qualified Health Center (FQHCs) program is a critical part of our country's health care safety net. Operating in medically-underserved areas, health centers provide care to 6 million uninsured individuals across the nation. Three health centers in our district participate in the Health Center program: El Centro de Corazon, Pasadena Health Center and Houston Community Health Center's Denver Harbor Clinic.

In the 109th Congress, I was the chief co-sponsor of House-passed legislation that would reauthorize the Health Center program through 2011. That bill did not pass the Senate, and I will re-introduce it and lead the effort to enact this important legislation in the 110th Congress.

We are also working to develop additional health centers in our district, and are currently working with the Pasadena Health Center and health care partners in our community to invest in a mobile clinic to serve medically-underserved residents of Galena Park, Jacinto City and other communities in the East End. Additionally, we are working with the Denver Harbor Clinic as it begins a critical expansion project that will result in a newly-constructed facility and increased capacity for patient encounters.

U.S. 90 Highway Project:

On November 3, 2006, Congressman Gene Green and Congressman Ted Poe commemorated the start of construction on US 90 at an event with Texas Department of Transportation Houston District Engineer Gary Trietsch. The Transportation Equity Act - A Legacy for Users (H.R. 3550) directly provided \$4.2 million for the US 90 project and the rest will be funded with a mix of state and federal funding. The long planned project will construct six main lanes of U.S. 90 from Hunting Bayou @ I-10 to Beltway 8 and Wallisville. Construction on this project began in August/September 2006 and is scheduled to be completed in 2009. You can check construction closures online at TxDOT's website <http://traffic.houstontranstar.org/construction/construction-report.aspx>.

Congressman Green, along w/ Congressman Poe and District Engineer Gary Trietsch hold a press conference during the groundbreaking of U.S. 90.

Manchester Bridge Update:

In April 2006, Congressman Green and Texas Department of Transportation Houston District Engineer Gary Trietsch joined dozens of Manchester residents for the start of construction on the Manchester Bridge project to build a grade separation over the railroad tracks that surround the Manchester neighborhood. The project is scheduled to be completed in June 2008 and will provide a major public safety benefit to the residents because emergency vehicles have been blocked from the neighborhood by stalled trains. The 1998 Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (P.L. 105-78) provided \$12 million in federal funding for the \$15 million bridge.

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, D.C. 20515

Official Business

M.C.

Presorted Standard

W/S Carrier Route

Si le gustaría recibir una copia de este noticiero en español, hágame el favor de escribirme a 256 N. Sam Houston Pkwy. E, Ste. 29, Houston, TX 77060. Si es más fácil, también puede llamar a nuestra oficina para recibir el noticiero al 281-999-5879.

This mailing was prepared, published, and mailed at taxpayer expense.